



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

discussed, agreement and a common understanding are more important than any one man's scheme. May the gods give us the mind and show us the way "to be in the unity."

Benj. Ide Wheeler.

Cornell University.

THE HIGH SCHOOL AND ITS ENEMIES.

One of the effects of a good education is that people are taught to be tolerant of diversities of opinion. There is no surer sign of true culture in man or woman than the desire and the ability to understand and to appreciate the discordant opinions that prevail among men on all the subjects of deepest interest to mankind.

People are born with different endowments into different environments ; are subject to widely different kinds of training ; grow up amid different circumstances ; and pass their lives in intimate associations that have little in common—is it strange that they do not all think alike ? Would it not be a miracle if they did ? Men differ in religion, in politics, in their estimates of all the affairs of life, as naturally as they differ in stature, form, and complexion. And when one is ready to admit that another may radically differ with him in opinion on vital questions without being either a scoundrel or an idiot, or even a "crank," he is not far from that kingdom where men strive after truth and righteousness, without hypocrisy and without partiality, seeking neither emolument nor applause, but only the priceless possession of a mind unwarped by prejudice, a soul unstained by sin, and a heart with sympathies as wide and deep as human weal and woe.

Now, there is no subject that interests more people than education, and on none, except religion, have men differed more widely. Whether you regard the extent to which all men should be made participants (as far as possible) in a common culture, or the things considered to be of chief importance in that culture, or the wisest, most salutary, and most successful method of accomplishing it—of drawing out the latent capacities of the mind and making them capable of vigorous and useful employment in the various walks of life—you find among men who have devoted

themselves to the study of the problems involved, the most divergent views, and among those who have not specially investigated the matter, a Babel of discord.

The history of education is a history of conflicts, both in thought and action, as memorable and as worthy of profound attention as any that have ever occurred on the field of human development. Any one of the great battles that have been lost and won in that domain, if carefully studied and adequately and vividly represented, would prove as full of absorbing interest as one of the campaigns of Alexander or Caesar, of Napoleon, Wellington, Washington, or Grant.

Such, however, is not the task I have taken upon myself at the present time. My purpose is simply to present one of the phases of existing disagreement and discussion in regard to principles and policies of education in this country, and to endeavor to make clear some of the considerations that ought to render an approach to ultimate agreement and settlement possible.

It is probably true that wherever in this country there are public "high schools" there is an element of opposition to them. I think it would not be easy to find an exception to this rule. With some the opposition is covert and insidious, and therefore difficult to deal with ; with others it is open and sometimes violent, and then not pleasant to encounter. I do not question its honesty in either instance. Where the war is open, it is waged under various banners, bearing many different devices. It may be said in general, however, that there are two classes of adversaries of our high schools as at present constituted ; the first consisting of those who are opposed to public high schools altogether ; who think them an excrescence upon the public school system that ought to be lopped off without delay ; and the second, of those who do not object to public high schools as such, but think that they might be made to serve a better and more generally useful purpose and that they therefore ought to be differently organized. In other words, there are those who do not want the high schools in any shape, and those who do not want them in their present shape. Let us examine the basis of opposition in each of these classes in order.

I. The objections of the first class have been summed up in these words : "The State has the right to educate *its* children just as far as will enable them to understand their duties and ex-

ercise their rights as citizens of a free country, governed by the popular voice. A primary education is sufficient for this ; therefore the State has the right to furnish a primary education and nothing more." This statement is then supplemented by the following : "The high school being patronized by but few, and the majority deriving no benefit from it, it is unjust to levy a general tax for its support."

The first observation to be made about these statements is that they are a tissue of inconsequential assumptions from beginning to end ; and the next is, that all the answers to them, that I have ever seen, have proceeded upon the fundamental error from which the assumptions arise. While assuming to be American, these statements are based upon an essentially un-American idea. And, in passing, it may be said, that perhaps the most astonishing thing in the history of American education is that a number of years ago "a statement of the theory of education in the United States of America" could be drawn up from a philosophical point of view that is radically anti-American, and that, apparently without further thought of its import and logical scope, a very large number of the "leading educators" of the country could sign it as "embodying clearly the idea of the relation of the American free school to the American Commonwealth," and that it could then be published as a semi-authoritative pronunciamiento by the United States Bureau of Education.

The thinking of some people is hag-ridden by an intellectual nightmare called the State. This phantasmal monster was and is the incubus of all the older civilizations. It is the nightmare of Europe at the present hour. And there is a class of educated people in this country (not a very numerous class, happily,) who love to see the word State "writ large," and who bow down before a fiction of the imagination as though it were a divinity descended from heaven.

In France, Louis XIV could say that he himself was the State — *L'État, c'est moi*. Why is it that in our country no individual, and no minor association of individuals, no matter how constituted or with what authority endowed, can say this? It is simply because in this country the State is nothing more than a convenient name for society in its political capacity, for the political organs that "we, the people," create, and the functions that we assign to them. Thus the whole people, but no one else,

might say with perfect accuracy and justice, “ *We are the State—L'état, c'est nous-mêmes !* ”

It follows from this that the State is not some mysterious external power that stands over against us and commands or forbids us to do this or that ; it is We, you and I and our neighbors and countrymen, who agree that we will do thus and so, or refrain from doing this or that. We want to live together, and in order that we may live together in amity, for *mutual protection* against all who may attempt to injure us or in any way to abridge our common liberties, and for *mutual furtherance* in all things that pertain to the common good, we agree that in all matters of public concern the general welfare (*salus populi*) shall be the supreme law ; and that, while relinquishing none of the rights that pertain exclusively to the individual and to families, we will do whatever can be fairly regarded as the general will and refrain from doing whatever can be justly construed as against that will. On this agreement our whole government and all our laws are based.

Strictly speaking, then, the State is simply the sum of those agencies which the people employ to carry out a common agreement. It has no personality, no power, no existence even, apart from the citizens who constitute the republic. It therefore has no children that belong to it as such. So far as there is any “belonging” (ownership) at all, children belong to their parents.

And now as to public education. It is undoubtedly the general will of the people of this country that there should be schools for all, maintained at the public expense. This, however, does not mean that it is the unanimous will of the whole people. For there are probably some in every community who do not believe in public education at all. If absolute unanimity were required before society could undertake any enterprise, it would never undertake anything, not even the common defence in time of war, against an aggressive foreign enemy ; for there are cowards and traitors in every land who cry peace when there is no peace. In such cases society as a body politic would come to an end, and civilization with it ; or rather they would never have had a beginning.

It is a vain assertion, therefore, to say the State has no right to do this and no right to do that, simply because there are individual citizens who object to it. The State (Society) does not trans-

pend its province in doing certain things, because you and I think it would be better to leave those things to private enterprise and control ; nor does it infringe upon my liberty when it taxes me for the support of measures of public policy which I can not approve. I am at perfect liberty to argue that such measures are unwise and to protest that they are ruinous, if I think so ; but I can not refuse to pay my taxes, to carry my part of the public burden, on that account.

“ Education for all,” for the whole people at public expense, is comparatively so new a thing and apparently so democratic a measure, that some people are apt over-hastily to assume that a necessary corollary of the proposition is : “ Only such education at public expense as can be given to ALL.” They regard this as the true republican (democratic) doctrine. It will be useful to remember, however, that “ education for all ” is not a specifically American doctrine ; that it is not the outgrowth of a republican form of government, and is not considered more necessary to the perpetuity of republican institutions than it is to the stability of governments that are anything but republican, and to order and obedience under such governments. In fact, the idea of universal education is much more thoroughly enforced in some monarchical countries than it is with us. The theory that a certain amount of education is necessary to make one a good citizen is accepted at least as generally in Germany as it is in the United States ; and it is worth remarking that universal compulsory education and universal compulsory military service in time of peace seem to go very well together, in the minds of both governors and governed, under the most complete military despotism the world has ever seen.

In this country it is with education as it is with every other proper matter of public concern ; whatever just thing is generally agreed upon is valid as long as substantial agreement continues. The mere fact that schools of all grades, from the infant-class to the university have been established by the American people, and that such schools continue to receive the hearty support of the people, and to be maintained at public expense, is the best and only necessary proof that the people want them. And it is this want, and not any particular theory of the relation of public education to our form of government, that constitutes their right to exist, and is their all-sufficient justification.

It is not a fact (as has often been confidently assumed on the one hand, and thoughtlessly admitted on the other,) that our public schools were established as a political expedient, for the sole purpose of enabling children, when they grow up, "to understand their duties and exercise their rights as citizens." Happily, the public schools have a far wider scope than is comprehended in preparing children for activity within the comparatively restricted province of political life. They are concerned with the training of children to be intelligent, true, noble and useful men and women, not merely in their political capacity, (which women also have,) but in all the diverse and complex relations of human life, whether as individuals or as members of society. The schools have always been understood to have this aim and office; and the theory that makes them a purely political creation for purely political ends, State agencies for State purposes, is as shallow as it is false, as unnatural and unhistorical as it is un-American.

In none of the United States have the people, so far as I am aware, ever said or authorized any one to say, that a "primary" education is sufficient for any of the purposes of life. On the contrary, the people have everywhere said, either explicitly or by implication, "Give everybody all the education possible." And wherever the question has been brought into court, as it has been in many states, the decisions have been uniformly in favor of the largest and most liberal construction of the powers granted by the several state constitutions to establish public schools; and "high schools" have been held to be part of an efficient system of free schools for the securing of a good common school education. Nay, the courts have gone even to the extent of saying in precise terms that "in the absence of any constitutional *prohibition* the whole matter of the establishment of public schools, the course of instruction to be pursued therein, how they shall be supported, upon what terms and conditions people shall be permitted to participate in the benefits they afford—in fine, all matters pertaining to their government and administration come within the range of proper legislative authority."

And now a word or two as to the alleged injustice of imposing a general tax for the support of high schools in view of the further allegation that the majority derive no benefit from them. Let us take an example for the purpose of illustration. It will

make substantially no difference from what locality we take it ; the facts are relatively the same everywhere. I choose one with the details of which I am thoroughly familiar, and begin by making an admission. It is true that of the 469 children that have been enrolled this year in the D Primary or First Reader grade of the public schools of P—— not more than one in ten will ever reach the High School, and of every ten who do reach the High School not two will remain to graduate. But does this prove that the High School ought not to be maintained by general taxation? If it does, then it also proves a still more startling proposition—it proves that no school beyond the First Reader grade ought to be supported at public expense. For, of the 399 pupils enrolled in the First Reader grade last year more than one-third did not reach the Second Reader ; and of those now in the Second Reader not more than three out of five will pass beyond the Primary grades. Nay, the argument, if valid, proves still more. If public education depended on the same amount of schooling being given to all alike, there could be no public education in P——, for a majority of the children of school age in that city are not in the public schools at all.

But, aside from this, could anything be more thoughtless and absurd than to assert that those who do not attend the schools derive no benefit from them? Is the postal service of no benefit to me because I have next to no personal correspondence? Do I derive no benefit from railways and telegraphs because other people do all the travelling and telegraphing? Are the courts of justice of no advantage to me because I never have any business before them? Are the jails and penitentiaries of no use to the great mass of citizens because they are never incarcerated there, and no one is sent there for invading their personal and individual rights? Every American-born citizen of the male sex, who has not forfeited the right by misconduct, is eligible to any office within the gift of the people ; ought the offices to be abolished because every one is taxed for their maintenance, though but a very small minority can hold them? Ought the military school at West Point and the naval academy at Annapolis to be discontinued because only about two boys for every hundred thousand inhabitants can be educated there?

There would be no reason for making serious answer to such absurdities as are involved in this “argument” against the high

schools, if it were not put forward by serious people. The fact is, that higher education of all degrees is of incalculable benefit to every community in hundreds of ways which it is impossible now to discuss, but which will suggest themselves readily enough to every intelligent person who will take the trouble to think about the matter. I do not think the objections to higher education at public expense have an inch of rational ground to stand on.

II. Let us turn now to the second class of opponents, to the people who admit that it is proper enough to maintain high schools by general taxation, but who say that such schools are not managed as they ought to be. They say that the ordinary high school course does not fit a boy or girl for the practical duties of life. These schools, they say, occupy the time almost exclusively with studies that are absolutely useless. In their excessive zeal, such people are apt to become bitter and declamatory; and some of them, who even in their more genial moments are not particularly careful of their speech, become, when in a splenetic mood, abusive and denunciatory.

Now, of course, our high schools and high school courses are not perfect. They are only human agencies and are therefore subject to human infirmities. In all departments of education, from the highest to the lowest, there has been room for improvement, and with the lapse of time many improvements have been made. Certainly no friend of the high schools would refuse to listen to any one who had anything to suggest for their betterment.

"Then, why not throw all the old trumpery of your course overboard, and give us something 'practical?' " says one.

"Agreed!" we reply. "Only tell us what is 'trumpery,' and prove that it is; and then tell us what is 'practical,' and prove it practical."

And now there is a chorus of voices, not harmonious, but clamorous and persistent. "Down with the classics!" "Away with Greek and Latin!" "The classical course is a humbug!" "Pitch the higher mathematics to the dogs!" "Let literature go hang!" "Your smattering of chemistry and physics is a fraud!" "Astronomy is a waste of time!" "What's the use of teaching history—can't a boy or girl, who wants to, read it?" And so on to the end of the litany.

If all the discordant voices of those who think they are op-

posed to what the high schools are doing were to find articulate utterance here there would not be a single subject left in any high school curriculum that would not seem to have its enemies. And if, on the other hand, you were to ask all those who wish to substitute something else for the present courses of study to name that "something," you would be sure to find an equal diversity of judgment as to what that "something" ought to be.

Anyone familiar with the history of educational opinion knows that for centuries the world has been filled with the clamor of the disputants about "what knowledge is most worth" and what pædagogical training is most effective. The quarrel about the relative value of the languages, ancient and modern, the mathematics, the physical sciences, natural and political history, and what not, would fill a library; and not one of the questions has been finally settled. The combatants are all still in the field. They remind one of the warriors who people the old Norse Valhalla, whose love of fighting must be gratified even there. Every morning they ride forth to battle, hack one another to pieces, and deluge the heavens with blood; but when dinner-time comes, the conflict is suspended, and all the slaughtered heroes start up alive and well, ready for unlimited boar's flesh and mead. Each of the doughty champions of the special educational virtue of some favorite branch of learning, though made to bite the dust on never so many battle-fields, might well exclaim with Emerson's Brahma:

" If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again."

Space will not permit details, either in telling what the deepest thinkers have said about the relative importance of the various branches usually included in the higher courses, or in elaborating what I think myself. A single instance must suffice for illustration.

If such disputes could be settled by the weight of testimony, the memorable array of witnesses called up by Sir William Hamilton in his celebrated controversy with William Whewell would establish beyond question that the mathematics as a means of intellectual culture are well-nigh sterile and therefore of the very smallest educational value.

Hamilton himself says; "If we consult reason, experience, and the common testimony of ancient and modern times, none of our intellectual studies tend to cultivate a smaller number of the faculties, in a more partial or feeble manner, than the mathematics."

Descartes, the greatest mathematician of his age and one of the greatest of all ages, said (in 1630) that he had renounced the study of mathematics for many years for the reason that he "was not anxious to lose any more of his time in the barren operations of geometry and arithmetic, studies which never lead to anything important."

Du Hamel, another famous French mathematician, said: "The mathematics have this of vice, that for the most part they render us alien to and abhorrent from the business of life."

I undertake to say that you can prove any proposition in regard to the educational value of any branch of literature, art, or science out of the mouths of eminent witnesses; and no one whose opinion can be wafted hither and thither by the winds of pædagogical controversy will ever find the *ποτὶ στω* of Archimedes from which to move the educational world, or even attain to pædagogical peace of mind on any subject whatever.

The object of all school work is threefold—information, discipline, and character. This is relatively true of all grades of school work. But it is not reasonable to expect perfection of discipline or exhaustive knowledge on any subject from the graduates of primary, grammar, or high schools. It will be well, therefore, to inquire what may reasonably be expected from high school graduates. This will lead us first to consider what opportunities, what course or courses of study, the high school ought to offer.

Recurring for a moment to the demand that the courses of study should be "practical," it will not escape our notice how utterly vague and intangible this demand is. I have never yet succeeded in finding out definitely what anyone who used the term in such connection meant by it, when he thought he meant something different from what is usually aimed at in a high school education.

With reference now to the curriculum, it might be argued that the essential character of the high school is determined by the fact that for all but comparatively few of the graduates it is the

end of school life. But the character of the high school is no more determined by this fact than the character of the high grammar grades is fixed by the fact that the great majority of pupils never go beyond them. From the lowest to the highest grade of our common schools the door of exit from one is the door of entrance to another. The whole course points upward—to something beyond. It is thus an incentive to go forward to “fresh woods and pastures new,” to higher and still higher attainment. So with the high school, it is absolutely necessary, in order that it may do its best work, that beyond there should be an open door and a beckoning hand. It should, therefore, in its course of study, look both backward and forward, and keep up a living connection in both directions. To enumerate, then, briefly the essential points, there should be in every high school :

1. A variable course in Language, by means of which it should be possible to gain some advanced knowledge of the mother tongue (including its literature) and a considerable degree of facility in the use of it both in speech and writing, and also possible to acquire an elementary knowledge of the classical languages, or of one or more modern languages, for such as desire such knowledge, either simply as an element of culture or as a preparation for further study either in college or out of it.

2. There should be such a course in Mathematics as will insure those having the aptitude for that study a pretty thorough comprehension of the relations of quantity and reasonable skill in the manipulation of formulas and processes, whether as a basis for the study of the experimental sciences in the high school or beyond it, or as a preparation for higher mathematical work, or as useful information and training for after life.

3. There should be an elementary course in the Experimental Sciences—Chemistry, Physiology, and Physics; and in those Sciences of Classification commonly included in the general term—Natural History; this on account of the intrinsic value of the knowledge and discipline gained in these studies, as well as for the reason that nowadays no well-informed person can be ignorant of them.

4. There should be a course in History and in the elements of Sociological Science, including Politics, Political Economy, and the fundamental principles of Jurisprudence and Legislation.

5. There should be some instruction in the Science of Mind and in Ethics; and some also in Drawing and Vocal Music.

This indicates in rough outline what opportunities the average high school should offer. It indicates that there should be a sufficient number of teachers to admit of several distinct courses of instruction ; for when pupils have gone through the primary and grammar schools we should begin to take some account of their individual and special aptitudes and predilections.

Many high schools fall short of doing the best work because they are not furnished with the means of doing it. They have neither an adequate working library, nor sufficient apparatus of other kinds, nor a full corps of teachers. This is especially the case in smaller communities, where the attendance is not large, the number of teachers necessarily small, books and apparatus scantily supplied, and where thus the best instruction is impossible, the number of subjects taught restricted, and the capacity for adapting courses to a variety of individual wants and preferences correspondingly limited. Such communities can not reasonably expect, with the means at their command, to have all the advantages obtainable at the great centres of wealth and population. If they can not do the best conceivable, they must do the best they can under the circumstances.

There are three things to be avoided in all high school courses : narrowness, shallowness, and one-sidedness ; and there are two things especially to be guarded against in judging of their work : the disposition to regard them as agencies for the imparting of mere examinable knowledge, and the tendency to treat them as training schools for some special vocation in life.

Even where " manual " training has been connected with high school studies, it has not been (according to its most sensible advocates) with a view to preparing pupils to enter upon any particular trade or calling ; nor is it assumed that the graduates from such schools are all to devote themselves to mechanical pursuits. The friends of manual training are well aware that some who enter such schools " will have no taste for manual arts, and will turn into other paths." In view of such admissions, it is difficult to see wherein the manual training school is more " practical " than schools without manual training.

The legitimate work of the high school is in the line of liberal education. And if anyone asks what is meant by that term, I know of no better answer than that of Sir William Hamilton. It is " an education in which the individual is cultivated, not as

an instrument toward some ulterior end, but as an end unto himself alone ; in other words, an education, in which his absolute perfection as a man, and not merely his relative dexterity as a professional man, is the scope immediately in view."

To sum up, finally, the answer to the question, what the most important things are that a high school ought to have accomplished for its graduates :

1. It ought to have cultivated the desire for knowledge to such an extent that the pupil will not be satisfied with what he has learned when he graduates—will not consider that he has "finished" his education ; and, as a corollary to this, the pupil ought to have acquired the habit of study, and to have become conversant with the methods of study, to such a degree that it will be comparatively easy for him to proceed with the work of educating himself, either with the help of a college, university, or professional school, or in the school of life.

2. It ought to have contributed to the drawing-out and sharpening of his perceptive and observing faculties, as well as to the development and training of his reasoning powers and his imagination, so far as to enable him to grapple with the problems of his further education ; and to have cultivated his courage, patience, endurance, perseverance, energy, and faithfulness, so as to fit him to cope with the tasks that actual life will present to him.

3. It ought to have so disciplined his will, his intuitional nature, his reverential instincts, his social impulses, his temper, that he will be fit to live among his fellow men and women ; quick to recognize the solidarity of human interests and the dependence of all upon a Higher Power ; equally quick to assert and ready to defend the right ; instant and constant in the performance of duty.

4. His intercourse with his teachers and his fellow students ought to have taught him noble emulation, gentle and gracious manners, helpfulness, and the chivalrous humanity of self-forgetfulness in the desire for others' good.

5. If, in addition to these things, the high school has taught its graduates, whether they be young men or young women, the rudiments of some half-dozen branches of useful higher knowledge, it will have done a great thing for them individually as well as for society at large.

These three, then—Character, Discipline, and Knowledge—are the aim of high-school work, and the achievement of that aim will be its enduring monument.

*Thomas Vickers, Superintendent of Schools.
Portsmouth, Ohio.*

ON TEACHING ENGLISH.

The recent report of the "Committee on Composition and Rhetoric," made to the Harvard Overseers, and Professor Hart's article on "Regents' Diplomas in English" published in the January issue of the *THE SCHOOL REVIEW*, are depressing, but not wholly unprofitable reading. There can be no wise use of remedies till a diagnosis has been made, and the disease is well understood.

These papers contain the replies of young men, nineteen years old or so and already matriculated in Harvard College or Cornell—replies made to questions asked them relative to their training in English in the preparatory school. Here are a few of their answers taken from, but hardly picked out of, the mass:—"We had no instructor in English. I never had any direct training in English Composition. We studied rhetoric; but only as a theory," says one. Another, telling us, "The first four years I don't think we averaged more than five hours a year in written work," adds, as if to confirm the assertion, "You would almost think that the teachers expected you to know English thoroughly without studying it but very little indeed." And still another, "I studied a rhetoric text-book *Thirty Weeks*, of which a good share of the time was spent in studying poetry, also Metaphors, Anthithesis, Hyperboles, Similies, and other kinds of sentences. We spent some time in Purity—Force and Precision." I might quote further, even at length, but I forbear. From a few learn many if not all—*ex pede Herculem*.

It would be easy to comment with spirit upon the pittance of time doled out to English in these schools and upon the methods of teaching employed—easy to grow facetious over the results of the training these young men exhibit in their replies. But for one I am deeply pained and saddened instead. I cannot wax